

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE  
TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE  
OF  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND HISPANIC-AMERICAN  
STUDENTS AT MIDDLEBURY**

**OCTOBER 1990**

**Middlebury College  
Middlebury, Vermont 05753**

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## Preamble

The Committee to Enhance the Experience of African-American and Hispanic-American Students was appointed by the Community Council as part of the process of planning to implement changes recommended by the Report of the Task Force on Student Social Life and mandated by the Board of Trustees. The guiding spirit behind our deliberations has been the Task Force's principal recommendation that "the College should create a coeducational residential/social system that celebrates the diversity and pluralism of the student body through inclusion rather than exclusion." Unlike the other three committees appointed by the Community Council, the charge of the Committee to Enhance the Experience of African-American and Hispanic-American Students embraced areas of need including, but not limited to, a coeducational residential/social system. Therefore, the Committee's recommendations relate not only to perceived residential needs of African-American and Hispanic-American students at the College but also to needs in the areas of academic support, socio-cultural programming, faculty recruitment, curriculum, financial aid, and admissions.

The committee met weekly from March 22, 1990 through May 10, 1990. During this period, the committee also held one joint meeting with the Residential Life Committee.

As a way of identifying needs which would enhance the experience of African-American and Hispanic-American students at Middlebury, the committee invited to several of its meetings, members of the faculty and staff at the College, as well as leaders of student organizations which represented the interests of African-American and Hispanic-American students (i.e., the African-American Alliance and the Hispanic-American League). The committee appreciated and benefitted from the testimony offered by those individuals.



## I Introduction

"The last of the issues that I wish to raise with you is the most easily stated one, but may be the most difficult to accomplish. It is the need for the leading colleges to come much closer than we have done to approximate in our populations the makeup of the American population as a whole. There are many reasons for needing to do this . . . . Early in the next century, there will be no ethnic majority in America's elementary schools. About fifteen years later, there will be no ethnic majority in our colleges . . . . When the numbers of high school graduates level off and begin to climb again, the majority of the restored growth will occur among groups now considered minorities, particularly Black and Hispanic. Given that set of facts, if the best colleges are to remain premier institutions, and if they are to continue to draw to themselves the best students--those who are potentially leaders-- then they will need to attract and keep an ethnic representation that is not too distant from that obtaining to the country as a whole. We will need to do that for the simple reason that that is the way nature distributes native talent, and if we want our fair share of that best talent, a commensurate proportion will be found among the groups currently underrepresented here.

In order to achieve this goal, the premier colleges will need to become places where members of minority groups can be comfortably productive. Saying that absolutely does not imply adding to the divisiveness and governance by constituency politics . . . . Saying that we need to work to become a place where members of today's minorities can be comfortably productive definitely does imply adding their historical and contemporary experience to the stock of experience which we share in our common ethos. Both curricularly and extracurricularly, and in ways that are appropriate, and with the same rigor with which we pursue all other subjects, we must include the historical and current participation of today's minorities in the story of our people and how we study and understand it.

Further, in order to attain the goal of a representatively diverse student body, colleges will need to become similarly representative in their professional staffs and faculties. Without such representativeness among the role models of the institution, commitments to diversity would hardly be whole, and students . . . would be deprived of an opportunity to experience what a harmonious multi-ethnic society might really be like." (Timothy Light's Inaugural Address as the 14th President of Middlebury College, 13 October, 1990)

This is the dream and the goal of Timothy Light for Middlebury College. The members of this task force join him in committing ourselves and our resources to enabling this process to begin. We are equally encouraged by what has already been initiated (on this issue) by previous task forces and committees.

This task force was established last spring by the Community Council to write a proposal for a course of action that Middlebury College could undertake to



enhance the quality of life for African-American and Hispanic-American students. After taking the time to review what the College has said over the past two decades about minority issues, we believe that it is time to take concrete steps to enhance and support the lives of our minority students. We would like to remind the Community Council of the four major reports that have already addressed the question we were asked to consider. These four reports are 1) the Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee Report (1969), 2) the Twilight Committee Report (1982), 3) the Twilight Committee Update (1988), and 4) the Agenda for Minorities: Priorities and Goals (1989).

In 1969, after a turbulent decade of events around the country, events that also affected the Middlebury community, the College formed the **King Committee** to examine closely the College's record in addressing minority concerns. The King Report issued a broad set of challenges and recommendations for continuing and hastening progress on minority issues at Middlebury College. Unfortunately, those proposals were not given a high priority and thus, the goals envisioned by the committee were never realized.

In 1982, a special ad hoc committee on minority concerns (the **Twilight Committee**) issued a major report to the College summarizing the progress that had been made in addressing the King Committee proposals. The Twilight Committee recommended the following:

- (1) Increased commitment to enrolling minority students and to providing adequate financial aid
- (2) Refinement and enhancement of the Pre-Enrollment Program
- (3) Highest commitment to the hiring of minority faculty
- (4) Increased commitment to minority studies in the curriculum including the establishment of a minority studies concentration
- (5) Increased attention to minority issues in at least three additional areas:
  - (a) orientation programs for faculty, student, residence hall staff
  - (b) minority cultural and social activities
  - (c) cooperation with (and special events for) minority alumni
- (6) Annual monitoring of the College's commitment to minority concerns

In 1988, the College established a new committee to write the **Twilight Update Report**. That committee made the following observation that we believe is germane to our report:

... The response of the college community in seeking to implement the recommendations of the Twilight Report has been successful and gratifying in many ways. But there have also been disappointments and discouragement about the rate of progress toward some of the goals articulated in the Twilight document. This report reviews our most notable successes and identifies areas where renewed commitment is needed. The challenge that has faced, and continues to face, the College is that of translating these general goals and statements of commitment into specific actions and programs.

We believe that the sentiments expressed by that Twilight Update are on target and should be addressed immediately. That report concluded with the articulation of four priorities:

- (1) To provide minority students with outstanding educational opportunities and with the support they need to succeed
- (2) To offer minority students a quality of life and a social context that enables them to benefit from, and to enjoy, their Middlebury experience
- (3) To bring more role models for minority students to the faculty and staff
- (4) To create an environment in which all members of the Middlebury community can experience the benefits of living and working with people from different backgrounds

The following year (1989), President Robison, with the endorsement of the Board of Trustees, issued an **Agenda for Minorities: Priorities and Goals**. That report called for the following actions and commitments by the College:

- (1) Strive to eliminate bigotry, insensitivity, intolerance, and racism—whether overt or subtle—in our community. No member of a minority group should feel threatened, intimidated, harassed, or unwelcomed. It is our goal that all of our graduates embrace the values, tolerance, and sensitivity that will enable them to serve well the pluralistic society in which they will function throughout their lives.



- (2) Provide strong academic support programs so that minority students rarely leave the College for academic reasons. Our goal is to reduce minority student attrition for academic reasons to a level no higher than that of majority students.
- (3) Strive to admit, support, and retain more minority students who will flourish and succeed at Middlebury throughout their undergraduate years. Our goal is to increase the percentage of minority students in each graduating class to at least 10 percent of all graduates.
- (4) Sustain and increase the number of minority people who are regular, continuing members of the faculty, staff, and administration. Our goal is to continue increasing each year the number of minority people on the faculty and staff.
- (5) Offer minority students a quality of intellectual, residential, social, and cultural life that allows them to benefit from and enjoy their Middlebury experience. Our goal is to achieve the same high retention rate and educational, personal, and social satisfaction for minority students as for all other students.

## II African-American and Hispanic-American Cultural Center

We propose that the College establish an African-American and Hispanic-American Cultural Center. The Center would serve intellectual, residential, social and cultural functions for students, staff and faculty. The Center would be located in one of the residential houses on campus providing living space for 12-15 students, a seminar room, student offices (e.g., for the African American Alliance and the Hispanic-American League), a library, and offices for some faculty teaching in African-American and Hispanic studies.

We should make clear that the proposal for a bicultural center initially came from African-American and Hispanic-American students. A series of discussions was held during the 1989-1990 academic year between members of the administration, the Minority Issues Group, members of our committee, and African-American and Hispanic-American students. The initial proposal for a Center was co-authored by one member of the committee. (See proposal by Rochford, Margolis, and Fairfax, Appendix 1.) After considerable discussion, the



African-American Alliance formulated its own proposal (see Appendix 2) which differed from the previous one largely in its emphasis on a bicultural center. In the spring, 1990, our committee voted unanimously in support of an African-American and Hispanic-American Center. (See Norman letter, May 10, 1990, Appendix 3.)

Although we anticipate that some members of the Middlebury community may believe that the Center invites exclusion, thereby undermining the pluralistic ideals of the College, we disagree. Our vision of pluralism is one of a patchwork quilt where diversity is respected, nurtured, and ultimately celebrated. Our mission as an intellectual community, we believe, is to understand and appreciate diversity. We see an African-American and Hispanic-American Center as a means by which to build understanding through learning about cultural experiences different from our own.

There are a number of specific ways an African-American and Hispanic-American Center would benefit students of color and the College community more generally:

- a. The College has sought ways to educate all students about issues of diversity. The proposed Center would respond directly to this need and could serve as a "clearinghouse" of sorts where members of the College community could seek information about and experiences of African-American and Hispanic-American cultures..
- b. The College has committed itself to diversifying its student population. The Admissions Office has been recently successful in its efforts to recruit Hispanic-American and African-American students. Moreover, in 1989 President Robison and the Board of Trustees committed the College to assuring that 10 percent of every graduating class be minority students. Since we have committed ourselves as a community to attract, educate and graduate people of color, it is important that we build and maintain social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual structures which assure success. The African-American and Hispanic-American Center would provide one important way of responding to these needs and goals.
- c. The presence of an African-American and Hispanic-American Center would provide tangible evidence of the College's social and intellectual commitment to diversity. We believe this would have many

positive consequences, including attracting to the College minority students, staff and faculty.

d. A building is more than "space." We believe that the Center would provide a tangible sense of ownership, empowerment, and connection to the Middlebury community for African-American and Hispanic-American students. It would allow all students to learn about differences while simultaneously providing a place where some students could more securely be themselves, providing one base from which to engage the larger community with confidence.

e. We believe the African-American and Hispanic-American Center would also provide a locus for larger cultural exchange and learning for citizens of Addison County and Vermont.

f. The Center promises to be attractive to African-American and Hispanic-American parents and alumni who would be better able to identify with the College given the presence of a Center devoted to understanding their culture and experience. The Center could also serve as a meeting place for minority alumni weekends.

Students should be selected to reside in the Center on the basis of both intellectual interest and cultural background. These criteria would serve the interests and needs of African-American and Hispanic students while assuring that the Center not become exclusive. We recommend the following criteria be used to allocate residential space in the Center: (1) Demonstrated intellectual interest in and commitment to the study of African-American and Hispanic-American culture and experience, broadly defined; (2) Cultural background. Other things being equal, African-American and Hispanic-American students should be given priority; (3) Class standing (i.e., highest priority for seniors, then juniors, etc.); and (4) Students would be allowed to reside in the Center for no more than two academic years.

Although the above criteria give preference to African-American and Hispanic-American students, we would expect that in any given year students from a variety of cultural backgrounds would be represented. Admission to reside in the Center each year would be decided on by a committee of students, faculty, and staff.



### III Minority Faculty

The College must increase its efforts to hire minority tenure-track faculty. We find ourselves in agreement with the Twilight Committee report which urged the College to give its "highest commitment" to hiring minority faculty. In its internal deliberations and discussions with a range of members of the College community, the committee continually confronted the issue of Middlebury's lack of minority faculty. We believe that this is a critical issue facing the College and demands immediate attention.

The need for greater diversity among the faculty is one the College has faced for many years. Yet this need appears especially crucial at this juncture in the College's history given the changing backgrounds of the student body. As Admissions attains growing success in attracting minority students to the College, the call for more minority faculty grows as well. Although we are not blind to the difficulties of attracting minority scholars to the faculty, it is nevertheless clear that present policies have met with limited success and that new strategies are required.

Currently, there are three full-time African-American faculty members at the College (in History, Sociology/Anthropology, Physical Education). John Norman, Director of Academic Support, also teaches part-time in the program in Teacher Education. The faculty also includes a limited number of Hispanic-Americans, Asian-Americans, and a Native American. (John Emerson, "Update on Minority Concerns," 1988).

Since December, 1986, the College has undertaken measures meant to attract minority scholars to the faculty. Of special importance has been the policy whereby departments can receive a temporary increment if they identify a "qualified minority candidate" (John McCardell Report to the Board of Trustees,



January 4, 1989, see Appendix 4). Although there have been one or two minority candidates hired under this policy, the policy has resulted in little change in the makeup of Middlebury's faculty. One reason may be that the incentive for departments to take advantage of the policy has been diluted by the provision that the increment is temporary, a situation that may have implications for future vacant positions. We recommend that the present minority faculty recruitment policy be reviewed with an eye toward increasing the incentives for departments to seek qualified minority scholars. Moreover, we believe that the College needs to research the recruitment programs of other colleges having greater success in attracting minority faculty. Williams, for example, had ten African-American faculty in the spring of 1990, five of whom were hired the previous year (see Karl Lindholm, "Notes on trip to Williams and Amherst, " March 27, 1990, Appendix 5). It is time for the College to search for creative alternatives to present policies, and perhaps to consider bold new initiatives to bring qualified minority scholars to Middlebury. This seems necessary if the College is to have any hope of reaching the goal of "sustain[ing] and increas[ing] the number of minority people who are continuing members of the faculty . . . each year . . ." (see Agenda for Minorities: Priorities and Goals, report to the Board of Trustees, 1989). As a community we have properly committed ourselves to such a goal. Now we must work in new and innovative ways to realize it.

#### IV African-American and Hispanic-American Studies Programs

We propose that the College establish the scholarly area of African-American Studies as an academic major, and develop an integrated set of courses, which explore the cultural heritage of Hispanic-Americans. In keeping with the stated objective of the College's Task Force on Student Social Life that "the College should create a coeducational residential/social system that celebrates the diversity and (cultural) pluralism of the student body through

inclusion rather than exclusion," this committee believes that this principle of inclusion should be extended to the curriculum as well. The current curricular offerings, though improved in recent years to include an academic concentration in African-American Studies, do not accurately reflect a balanced and integrated approach to the multicultural nature of American society. Specifically, the College's curriculum has a Eurocentric orientation which portrays the contributions to the development of American society of non-European cultures as appendages rather than integral to the main body of information and intellectual analysis. In order to assure that all Middlebury students develop the ability to understand, respect, and accept people whose backgrounds differ ethnically, religiously, and culturally, all elements of the curriculum must be developed and taught from the perspective of the multicultural contributions to the development of our society.

African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Native Americans have been victims of an intellectual and educational oppression which has characterized the cultural and institutional interpretations of American for the past four centuries. Puerile and pejorative characterizations and the omission of any reference to these groups within the context of intellectual and historical inquiry have contributed to the miseducation of all persons and exacerbated the ethnic and racial cleavages which exist in American society. In short, the intellectual, technological, artistic, and economic contributions to American society by non-European cultures have either been omitted, distorted, or trivialized in nearly all textbooks and mainstream publications.

In recognition of the existence and validity of the absence of full, fair, and accurate treatment of the role that non-European cultures (and their attendant beliefs and values) played in the development of American society, institutions with which Middlebury compares itself have developed academic majors in



African-American Studies. These institutions, comparable to Middlebury in terms of their size, academic mission, philosophy, and academic reputation recognize and accept the importance of having their curricula reflect the issue of multicultural education. Below is a partial list of such colleges with established programs in African-American Studies:

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Program of Study</u>	<u>Academic Major or Concentration</u>
Amherst College	Black Studies	Major
Bowdoin College	Afro-American Studies	Major
Carleton College	African-American Studies	Major
Colby College	African-American Studies	Minor (7 required courses)
Haverford College	African-American Studies	Concentration (6 required courses)
Swarthmore College	Black Studies	Concentration (6 required courses)
Trinity College (CT)	African-American Studies	Concentration
Wesleyan University	Afro-American Studies	Major
Williams College	Afro-American Studies	Concentration (Honors Prog. 7 courses)
Source:	Middlebury College: Office of Career Counseling and Placement Microfiche files-October, 1990.	

It is of crucial importance to understand not only what the expanded academic visibility of African-American Studies will mean to the curriculum at Middlebury, but of equal importance are the future societal benefits to all members of the College community. Establishing African-American Studies as an academic major at Middlebury will assist all members of the community in developing a multicultural style of thinking, feeling and acting in all of their interpersonal interactions. Armed with an expanded appreciation and knowledge of the multicultural nature of American's origins and development, we will be



better able to deal effectively with social change and inter-ethnic conflict. Finally, and perhaps most important, an academic major in African-American Studies will ameliorate the deleterious effects on intergroup relations created by an ethnocentric perspective (i.e., one which appraises and evaluates the socio-cultural environment in accordance with one's own experiences and ethnic background). The committee recognizes, that an individual's personal experience and cultural moorings act as the critical reference point from which social phenomena and historical circumstances are evaluated.

The preeminent concern of this committee is not to suggest that an ethnocentric orientation is an affliction of white Americans exclusively; rather, it is to suggest that the furtherance of intergroup harmony in the United States is a function of a multicultural perspective based upon knowledge of, respect for, and acceptance of ethnic and cultural differences.

Currently, the College offers African-American Studies as an academic concentration through courses offered in the departments of History, Sociology/Anthropology, American Literature and Civilization, Music, Religion, and Political Science. Students take a total of four courses from an available pool of 16 is required to declare an academic concentration in African-American Studies. It should be understood that we feel the College has taken a major step by approving this important academic concentration. However, in spite of its interdisciplinary approach to the subject, the constituent courses of the concentration do not include a full range of academic areas (e.g., Art and Geography). Especially disturbing is the absence of courses in the natural sciences and the history of science.

With respect to the development of a set of courses which reflect the historical and social experience of Hispanic-American (e.g., Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cuban-Americans, etc.), such academic offerings

would attest to the importance of the variety of contributions of these ethnic groups and their relationship to the development of the U. S. A freshman seminar in the fall of 1989 ("Visions of Alienation and Assimilation: Hispanic Writers in the United States") is the only course the College has offered with such an academic focus. We propose that the College establish in the near future either an academic concentration or a major in this area. In order to begin that process we now propose that a set of at least four courses be established which would focus on the history, literature, and sociology of Hispanic-American ethnic groups.

If the above proposal were implemented by the College, the following benefits would result:

(1) Course offerings in areas of African-American and Hispanic-American history and culture would enhance the potential for multicultural literacy on the part of the entire Middlebury community. All Middlebury students would have the opportunity to become acquainted in a meaningful way with the rich history and culture of African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans.

(2) The existence of an academic major in African-American Studies would aid in the recruitment of African-American and Hispanic-American faculty and students. Prospective faculty would view the College in a more positive light because of the status accorded to the study of African-American and Hispanic-American culture and history at Middlebury. Further, the inclusion of an academic major creates additional appointment options for the various departments which contribute to the major. Prospective African-American and Hispanic-American students would be more predisposed to matriculate at the College if they knew that the College's curriculum reflected not only the existence of intellectual inquiry vis `a vis their history and culture, but also that its standing within the curricular offerings was important enough to be given academic status and visibility.



## V Recruitment, Retention, and Financial Aid

In December 1988 President Olin Robison endorsed a statement of priorities in regard to students of color on campus. On that list, Goal #3 states:

Strive to admit, support, and retain more minority students who will flourish and succeed at Middlebury throughout their undergraduate years. Our goal is to increase the percentage of minority students in each graduating class to at least 10 percent of all graduates.

To an immeasurable degree, the quality of campus life for students of color depends on attracting and maintaining that significant percentage.

### RECRUITMENT

We recommend continued emphasis on recruitment of qualified students of color. We support continued attention and review of admissions efforts toward that end (i.e., "at least 10 percent" of each graduating class). Increasing the number of students of color is the goal, but the goal must not become an end unto itself. Focus needs to remain on the students' chances for success at Middlebury and not on the numbers alone.

### RETENTION

We recommend that the Minority Issues Group focus more specifically on steps to improve retention, or that a group be organized for that purpose alone.

The list of priorities mentioned above also states that, "our goal is to reduce minority student attrition for academic reasons to a level no higher than that of majority students." We recognize that important steps have already been taken to achieve a desirable level of retention (e.g. creation of a position of Director of Academic Support, continued use of the Pre-Enrollment Program, and the increased extra-curricular programming on issues of race and ethnicity.) The Minority Issues Group, the Dean of Students office, and specific individuals from other areas have supported students in significant ways at different times, however, there needs to be a more concerted effort. Although the effectiveness of efforts which contribute to retention may lend themselves to quantitative



evaluation, we urge the College to review what is currently being done. We also recommend that the College allocate to retention efforts set number of staff members, and budget allotment, equal to those which are devoted to the recruitment of students of color. As a beginning, the College should undertake a study to assess why students of color leave Middlebury prior to graduating.

### FINANCIAL AID

We recommend that steps be taken on the part of the Financial Aid office to improve communication with students of color: new and old students need to better understand their financial aid packages; changes in aid packages from year to year need to be anticipated and explained; students need reassurance that increases in the comprehensive fee will not mean proportionately less aid.

We recognize that the financial aid budget for students has increased substantially in recent years, and currently represents a laudable portion of the College's total budget. Our focus has not been on the amount allocated to aid, but on the relationship between the Financial Aid office and students.

Dealing with aspects of financial aid is part of the College experience for many students of color. For students dependent on financial aid, it is a source of anxiety, and because of the complexity of the calculations and decision-making, it is often times confusing. To the degree to which students feel more informed, we are confident that their lives here will be more secure and that financial considerations will play less of a role in decisions by students of color to leave Middlebury before graduation.

## VI SUPPORT STAFF

After reviewing the earlier documents that the College has written on issues related to minority students, it seems obvious that we must begin to take seriously recommendations made over these past 20 years. In order to make some

of the goals a reality we are convinced that Middlebury needs to provide a more solid foundation in the support staff for students of color.

The task force has agreed that there are areas that the College must have a support presence for minority students. We are recommending that African-American and Hispanic-American professional support staff be present in the following areas:

- \* (1) African-American and Hispanic-American Cultural Center (with a joint appointment in the Office of Student Activities)
- (2) Dean of Students office
- (3) Center for Counseling and Human Relations
- (4) Department of Academic Support
- (5) Admissions office
- (6) Financial Aid office
- (7) Pre-Enrollment Program
- \* (8) Assistant to the Chaplain
- (9) Writing Center/Peer Tutoring Program
- (10) Athletic department
- \* Proposed staff positions related to these functions

It should be noted that we have a glaring lack of minority persons in the administration of the College. We hope that those in positions of authority and decision-making will consider serious and positive effect of the role models on the quality of the lives of our minority students and on the majority community.

## VII SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The guiding principle which permeated the committee's deliberations was that the existing commitments and objectives approved by the College with respect to students of color provided the appropriate point of reference for our efforts to



develop recommendations. As evidence of the College's existing commitment "to enhance the experience of African-American and Hispanic-American students at Middlebury," the committee reviewed recommendations contained in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Report, Twilight Report, the Post-Twilight Report, the Minority Advisory Workshops, the Task Force on Student Social Life. Thus, the committee saw no need to "re-invent the wheel" by restating a variety of "needs" from previous reports which had been approved by administrative bodies at the College, including the President and the Board of Trustees.

Unlike the Task Force on Student Social Life, the committee expanded the concept of "inclusion" from its coeducational/residential context to embrace the College's curriculum, its staffing patterns, the composition of the student body, and socio-cultural programming. The committee believes that in order to enhance significantly the experience of African-American and Hispanic-American students, the College must reflect ethnic diversity at all levels of its structure. That is to say, the level of satisfaction and quality of the academic and non-academic experiences of African-American and Hispanic-American students at Middlebury is a function of the extent to which the College is able (and willing) to diversify itself administratively and curricularly. Distilled to its essence, the overarching objective of the committee's recommendation is that Middlebury, in light of the changing ethnic composition of the United States, move with all deliberate speed toward a multicultural community.

Although this report has dealt with a range of specific needs and concerns relating to African-American and Hispanic-American students at Middlebury, we think it important to end by raising two other, more general issues encompassed by the term "diversity". First, we believe it crucial for the College to continue giving its full support to the work of the Human Relations Committee, the Minority Issues Group, and the Racial Harassment Committee. These



committees are on the front line with respect to addressing issues of diversity at Middlebury. Their efforts deserve any and all appropriate support the College can provide. Second, while the charge of this committee has been to address questions of concern with the respect to enhancing the experience of African-American and Hispanic-American students our deliberations have made us acutely aware of the needs of other "minority" students at Middlebury. We see a particular need for the College to recognize and begin to support its gay, lesbian, and bisexual students. (see Jeffrey Spencer letter, Appendix 6.). If diversity is a goal of the College, we as a community must come to terms with the rights and needs of all of our members.

Respectfully Submitted,

Members of the Committee

Ofelia Barrios '93

Wendy Morse '92

Jeffrey Spencer '93

Serge Vatel '91

Alvin Williams '90

Kathy Lindsey - Admissions

Burke Rochford - Dept. of Sociology/Anthropology

John Walsh- Chaplain/Community Council

John C. Norman, Chair - Dept. of Academic Support

## APPENDICES

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DRAFT, FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

Proposal: Members of the African American Alliance, the Hispanic Alliance, and the Minority Issues Group have proposed that the College establish a Multi-Cultural Center. The Center would serve intellectual, residential, social and cultural functions for people of color, and for other students, faculty and staff throughout the College. Ideally, the Center would be located in one of the residential houses on campus, or a building would be constructed for it. Space would be provided for seminar rooms, student offices (e.g. Officers of AAA and Hispanic Alliance, and Director of the Multi-Cultural Center), a library, and perhaps offices for faculty teaching in Afro-American Studies, Hispanic Cultures, and East Asian Studies. The Center would also provide living space for a limited number of students whose intellectual interests center on Afro-American, Hispanic, and/or East Asian cultures.

Rationale: There are a number of areas where a Multi-Cultural Center would benefit students of color and the College community more generally:

- a. The College has sought ways to educate all students about issues of diversity. The proposed Center would respond directly to this need and could serve as a "clearing-house" of sorts where members of the College community could seek information about and experiences of cultures different from their own.
- b. The college has committed itself to diversifying its student population. The Admissions Office has been recently successful in its efforts to recruit Hispanic and Afro-American students. This very success requires that the College support ways to assure the success of these students. For some students of color their survival at Middlebury, especially freshman year, depends upon the social, cultural, and residential support system provided by other Afro-American/Hispanic students. Since we have committed ourselves to attracting and graduating people of color with a positive experience, it is important that we build and maintain social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual structures which assure success. The Multi-Cultural Center would respond to these needs.
- c. The presence of a Multi-Cultural Center on campus will attract minority students and faculty to the College. The Center will demonstrate Middlebury's active commitment to diversity.
- d. A building is more than "space". We believe that a Multi-Cultural Center will provide a tangible sense of ownership, empowerment, and connection to the Middlebury community. It will allow students to learn about differences and simultaneously provide a place where some students can more securely be themselves, so that they can interact with wide constituencies.
- e. As is our hope with the new Arts Center, a Multi-Cultural Center can provide a locus for cultural exchange and learning for citizens of Addison County and Vermont. Some alumni and parents might also view Middlebury more favorably with a Center to which to return and with which to identify.

Course of Action: Each generation of students has its desire and will, not only to keep "its eyes on the prize", but to realize that prize - to insure that what has been personally and collectively suffered and endured is transformed into tangible and lasting progress. To that end, we request the President's Staff to begin considering this proposal now, to form a committee to meet this Spring, Summer, and mid-Fall, and to report to the community by October break, 1990 as to the College's action in this regard.



## LIVING-LEARNING CENTER PROPOSAL

There is about all of Middlebury's education a sense of looking outward, a realization that the traditional insularity of America is indeed something of the past, a habit that we can no longer afford. We seek to bring to Middlebury...those who wish to expand their vision...Indeed it could be said that the central purpose of Middlebury's education is precisely this transcendence of one's ownself (Middlebury College Handbook).

### INTRODUCTION

Middlebury is well known as one of New England's outstanding liberal-arts colleges. It is a college which is proud of its stature among the nation's best, but which aims to distinguish itself by transcending "the traditional insularity of America." An important aspect of attaining this aim is the establishment of a "student body which will contribute to the diversity of the community." This is an important task, and should continue to receive the full attention of the college. However, recruitment without adequate support systems for retention will only result in Middlebury becoming a revolving door for students of color. The establishment of a bi-cultural living learning center is the means to the college's end of a sustained diversity.

### RATIONALE FOR BI-CULTURAL-CENTER:

Middlebury College, in the last several years, has decided that matriculating students of color is an important aspect of the college's mission to instill in its students and faculty a concern for learning about more than just themselves. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that increasing the number of students of color is not in itself a means to enhancing cultural awareness on our college campus. In order to effect this goal there must also be a commitment to instituting the precepts of cultural plurality on a college wide level. The proposed residential bi-cultural center will achieve this end on many fronts. The following are a few of the areas in which the Residential Bi-Cultural Center would benefit the students of color and the college community.

- A. The "living-learning center," by providing an area where students and administrators may research African and Hispanic cultures, and by creating a facility which may enhance the college's attempts at attracting Black and Hispanic professors and thus ours efforts to establish African and Hispanic American studies as Major Departments, will diversify the curriculum, and send a message to the college community that the cultures of Africans and Hispanics are important enough to be taught and learned at Middlebury.
- B. The academic, cultural, social and emotional stability provided by the center's living space, will enhance the college's ability to attract and retain students of color, while enhancing our social and cultural experience at Middlebury.
- C. The commitment that the living-learning center would demonstrate, will assist Middlebury in its efforts to attract Faculty and Staff Members of Color.
- D. The added cultural awareness of all Middlebury students, the enhanced social, emotional and academic stability of Middlebury's students of color, and the added faculty members of color a residential bi-cultural center is likely to attract, will secure Middlebury's place as a leader in higher learning.

### PROPOSAL:

Although most colleges enjoy considering themselves as pioneers in the art of education, they are very much concerned about what their rival schools are doing. Middlebury is no exception. Therefore, it is important to point out that living-learning centers similar to the one proposed currently exist at Amherst, Wesleyan, Oberlin, U. Penn, and so on. These schools are not so very different from Middlebury and thus we ask that Middlebury show the commitment which other of our nation's best private institutions have shown by: Establishing a Residential Bi-Cultural Center by January of 1991. The living learning center, as we envision it, will be a residential and cultural center. Both of these, for the aforementioned mentioned reasons, we see as being equally important. Therefore, we are unwilling to accept one without the other. The Residential component of the living learning center will house 15-20 students. The students who want to live in the center will have to apply to do so. Residency will be based on the applicants interest in African and Hispanic concerns, and on their class standing. Similar to the concept of the Chateau, preference will be given to students who participate in the African American Alliance, and The Hispanic American League, and students taking courses relevant to African and Hispanic cultures. The bi-cultural center would contain a museum of African, and Hispanic artifacts, seminar rooms, a library, and offices for faculty teaching in African American, and Hispanic American cultures.



To: Dean Garfield  
Jenneth Martin  
Lydia Ramos  
Carla Sizer  
Jean Taitt

From: John C. <sup>JCM</sup>Norman, Chair of the Committee to Enhance the  
Experience of African-American and Hispanic-American  
Students at Middlebury  
Re: Living/Learning Center Proposal

May 10, 1990

The purpose of this letter is to apprise you of the fact that the Community Council sub-committee which I have the privilege and responsibility of chairing has discussed in great detail the bi-cultural living learning center in last week's meeting.

After much discussion regarding the concept (including the residential component), rationale and the timetable for its implementation, members of the committee have voted unanimously to support the African-American Alliance and Hispanic-American League in seeing that this concept comes to fruition at Middlebury. The committee will acknowledge its support in the form of a set of written recommendations to be submitted to the Community Council.

Please be aware that other recommendations will pertain to the socio-economic, financial, and academic needs of students of color here at Middlebury. I hope that you will share the content of this letter with members of your respective organizations.

cc: Ann Hanson

4 January 1989

John McCardell  
Dean of the Faculty

RECRUITING MINORITY FACULTY

Middlebury College seeks to increase the number of minority faculty members. Our recruiting guidelines provide two ways of pursuing this objective.

When a vacancy exists, departments are required to advertise the position widely and to be sure that a notice appears in both The Black Scholar and, where possible, the appropriate minority professional journal. After screening applications, departments are required to rank their top four candidates. At least one of these four must be a woman or a member of a minority group. These candidacies are reviewed by the Provost and Dean of Faculty and, where appropriate, the Vice President for Foreign Languages and the Associate Provost. After this review has been completed, the department will be authorized to invite the top ranking candidate to campus for a visit. An invitation to campus means that a candidate's credentials are completely acceptable; no one is ever invited to campus who is not, on paper at least, fully qualified to teach at Middlebury.

If a vacancy does not exist, it is the College's policy to create a temporarily incremental position in a department that has identified a qualified minority candidate. The position thus created is regular (i.e., tenure track). The increment, however, is temporary. The next time a regular position in the department becomes vacant, the department will, as with any such vacancy, need to justify to the Teaching Resources Committee the continuation of the increment. Continuation will not be automatic. Any department receiving an incremental position of this sort will normally be expected to cover leaves without replacement so long as the increment obtains.



May 1, 1990

Notes on Trip to Williams and Amherst - 4/27/90

Last Friday, I accompanied four Middlebury students (two African-American students - Carla Sizer, Alvin Williams; two Hispanic students - Eileen Ramirez, Maria Diaz), George McGivan of Computer Science and Ken Myers of American Literature to Williams College and Amherst College to take a brief look at those spaces that are allocated to students of color. This was a part of our education this spring, to get a sense of what is appropriate at Middlebury on behalf of student groups which represent multicultural diversity.

At Williams, we visited the Multicultural Center and spoke for an hour and a half to Preston Smith, Associate Dean of the College, and Nura Dualeh (class of 1985, Williams), Director of there Multicultural Center. Representation at Williams is as follows: 180 Asian students; 150 African-American; 75 Hispanic.

They are complimentary of President Oakley and his Affirmative Action plan. Williams invited Affirmative Action consultants to their campus and have followed rigorously their proposals. Among their proposals was an increment to the Dean of the College staff, a new position as Associate Dean; Mr. Smith was Director of the Third World Center at Brown. At the same time, the Multicultural Center was conceived and Ms. Dualeh was the first director. They have ten African American professors (one visiting); they had five "new hires" last year. They have hired two of their Bolin Fellows. This recent momentum has a relationship to a dramatic protest at Williams 2-3 years ago.

The Multicultural Center at Williams is non-residential. Williams has the tradition of non-residential special interest space. Mr. Smith and Ms. Dualeh were quick to point out that students can move easily in groups at Williams in their complicated residential scheme. Thus, there are ample opportunities for black students to live together in small groups.

The Multicultural Center is in a grouping of three very substantial buildings. Rice House is the Black Student Union, a three story structure with very ample social and office space. Since 1985, there has been a de facto policy in Rice House excluding non blacks. This does not seem to cause a problem at Williams (though in truth we did not get far into the matter). Hardy House is again a three story building which houses primarily the Women's Center, also having space for the Gay and Lesbian group. The Multicultural Center is a "umbrella" organization,

which offers office space for VISTA (Chicano students), ASIA (Asian students), SOAR (I believe the acronym stands for Students Organized Against Racism), and other groups. The major issues that Williams is facing regarding multiculturalism focus on the curriculum. A Jewish Center is being built on another part of the campus from private donations.

These three building are just off the main street in Williamstown, but are not considered in the middle of campus. The neighborhood in which they are located is zoned to prohibit use as student housing.

Amherst is organized quite differently. We were not able to speak to administrators there (they were occupied by the consequences of an on campus suicide). The only space we visited was the Charles Drew House, a house which is organized to support programming for African American concerns. It is a former fraternity house, renovated in 1987. It is gorgeous. Students take obvious pride in the space. Drinking and smoking is not allowed at any of their functions.

This year, all of the students in the house are African-American students. A short time ago, a majority of students in the house were white students who were interested in promoting African American issues. It is not an arm of their Black Student Union, though there is significant co-sponsorship of events. There is a rigorous selection process to determine who may live in the house. Students fill out an application, describing their programming ideas, to a group of five people including faculty and administrators, who determine who lives there. An Associate Dean of Students is the adviser to the House, but that is changing. To conform with other theme houses, a member of the faculty in the Black Studies Department will become the adviser.

The Charles Drew House has an unusual history. One of the first integrated fraternities at Amherst was disbanded in 1977. At that time, the building was in terrible shape. The black students then took over the building by drawing into the space, it became at that time a de facto black student residence. In 1987, this dimension was made formal (as a result, as students put it, of "significant political activity"). It was formally dedicated in a ceremony as the "Charles Drew House." The affiliation is with the



Black Studies Department. The numbers at Amherst are approximately as follows: 90 African-American students; 70 Hispanics; 100 Asian-Americans.

There are three other theme houses at Amherst - an Arts House, a Russian/German House, a Spanish/French House. Asian students were provided group living on the top floor of the dormitory. The controversy regarding theme houses at Amherst lies in the appeal of old fraternities as residential space. The students are all convinced that there will be no more theme houses. They say students would not stand for the elimination of so many good rooms in particular groups. The student body President was present at our discussion at the Charles Drew House (he is a black student) and he indicated that any future theme housing would be located on dormitory floors. A group called the College Council (which appeared to resemble very closely our Community Council) had jurisdiction over the theme houses and will evaluate petitions for new space. None of the students participated anticipated an expansion of the theme houses at Amherst.


The Black Student Union has its own space (the Gerald Penny Cultural Center, named after a student who died in 1973). It is in a building called the Octagon, essentially a very large room there. Other multicultural organizations have office space in the Campus Center. The Black Student Union did not move to the Campus Center because of the appeal of their space in the Octagon. Thus, at Amherst, there is a black student organization as well as a residential space devoted to African American Programming for the campus.

Students clearly took great pride in this space and the opportunity to use it as a base for their programming. We spoke with students for almost an hour and the constant theme was how differently they used their space from the way other students used the old fraternity buildings (the impression appears to be that those are vigorous social centers, read lots of alcohol abuse.)



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Other Members of the Committee to Enhance the Experience of African-American and Hispanic-American Students at Middlebury College

FROM: Jeffrey D. Spencer '93 

RE: Our Committee's Final Report

In our meeting on Thursday May 10, I expressed my strong feelings that our committee include a recommendation concerning Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual students in our Final Report. I did not state my idea specifically enough, I feel, so I would like to propose the following:

**Middlebury College needs to recognize and begin to support its Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual students immediately.**

**Rationale:** Students of Color at Middlebury College face many challenges. These challenges are made even greater for those who, in addition to not belonging to the most numerous cultural group, are also either struggling with the issue of sexual orientation or already identifying as Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual. These students have very unique needs which the College is blatantly disregarding in nearly every aspect of student life.

a) Reword the College's current non-discrimination statement not only to include "sexual/affectional orientation" but also to change the negative-sounding statement currently found at the start of the College's catalogue: "Middlebury College *complies* with..."

b) Provide workshops and training on the effects of homophobia. Every effort must be made to have everyone's attendance, from the President and his immediate staff down to J.C.'s and house directors, as well as the organizations which are currently fraternities

c) Include Gay/Lesbian activities, culture, and programming at the College. As the African-American Alliance should not be solely responsible for all events relating to African-American culture, so should the Gay/Lesbian/Straight Alliance not be solely responsible for Gay and Lesbian activities here. A resource person in the Student Activities Office must be hired. She or he will be responsible for coordinating programs on issues relevant to

Students of Color, Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Students, as well as other diverse groups.

d) Provide support through the Center for Counseling and Human Relations for Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Students of Color. This might include: at least a half-time position for a gay or lesbian professional; special support groups funded by the College, and special literature describing services for Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Students of Color.

e) Begin offering courses on Gay and Lesbian issues. These could be included under many departments, including History, Sociology/Anthropology, Literary Studies, English, American Literature and Civilization, and Women's Studies.

My experiences as a gay man on this campus have been less than encouraging. In addition to being told that Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual people do not exist here, I often receive a message that discrimination against my people is not considered legitimate because we can hide our difference if we so choose. While I recognize the reality that I can conceal my sexual/affectional orientation, I discount the latter portion of this message. Homophobia is partially an *oppression of suspicion*, and therefore is unique in nature. Furthermore, I know or know of five Students of Color on this campus who identify as lesbian, bisexual, or gay. This number is a substantial portion of the Gay community here. I therefore urge you to consider this issue and ensure the inclusion of the recommendation above in our Final Report.

I am more than willing to speak with any of you at length about this issue. I will be, as will everyone, trying to finish everything before the end of the academic year (for me May 22), but will be available. Until May 22, I can be reached at x 3710 or Box 3350. During the summer I can be reached at: 930 Ridgeland St. Cheyenne, WY 82009.

Thank you for your time, and best wishes for the summer!